

PETER IN A STORM

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"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid and beginning to sink, he cried, Lord save me." Matt. 14: 30.

The above is the language of Peter on the night the disciples were caught in the storm on the sea of Galilee. They had been trying all night to cross the sea, a distance of only about six miles, but failed. Toward morning after Jesus had spent a night of prayer on the mountain he came to their rescue. He did not stop to get a boat, but simply walked on the sea of water as if it was a sea of glass. The scene was too much for the disciples; they thought it was an apparition, or a spirit. They had seen Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, and just the night before saw him feeding the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. They should have expected him to come to their rescue as he had sent them upon the water. Notwithstanding all this they became alarmed at the sight of Jesus walking on the water. "They cried out for fear." What a pitiful sight to see those twelve strong men, the special chosen friends and apostles of the Master, those men whom Jesus sent out to preach the gospel, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out devils; these men who should have been fearless, courageous, and confident of their safety because the Master had sent them upon the sea. How true the saying, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." I wonder if any of us would be any better under similar circumstances.

The whole of the New Testament abounds with prophecies and promises concerning the Lord's coming again. Some of us sing and pray about it, and for it, and yet if we saw him coming for us to deliver us from our struggles as he did to deliver the disciples on the night of the tempest I suppose many would cry out for fear.

Many people do not like to think or talk of the Lord's coming again: there is a terrible description given in the latter part of the sixth chapter of Revelation as to the effect it will produce upon many when he comes. Read what the Revelator says:

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men; and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb."

But blessed be the Lord Jesus there is a better promise to the true children of God who are anticipating his coming; while in the flesh they will naturally partake of the sufferings and fears of the flesh as the apostles did on that memorable night, but Jesus did not allow them to fear very long; as soon as he perceived their fear he cried, "Be of

good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." So it will be when the Lord comes again; about the time fear will come upon his dear ones, "they shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (in Christ) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, (I Cor. 15: 52) and be caught up with the Lord in the air," I Thess. 4: 17. Oh, the magic effect of the words "It is I" when followed by the words "Be not afraid." When Peter heard those words of the Master he forgot the storm, he forgot all about the apparition, he forgot the water that was beneath him, and cried "Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." When the saints who will be fortunate enough to be living when the Lord comes once hear the words "*It is I, be not afraid*" they too will forget all their surroundings and cry Lord if it be thou let me come unto thee in the air.

It is very significant that the Lord did not say to the apostles, Be of good cheer it is Jesus, or it is the Christ, or it is the Son of man, or it is the Son of God. He used the only name, or title that expressed the sufficiency for the occasion. "*I am that I am.*" "*Before Abraham was I am.*" This is the highest title given to Jesus, and the only title that expresses all that he was. As the Savior from sin only he might not have been able to still the tempest; as the Son of man partaking of the nature of man he might not have been equal to the emergency, but when he comes as God himself, as the "*I am*" he comes with all the power of God the Father. He says in effect, I am the one by whom the worlds were made; I am the one for whom the worlds were made; I am the one by whom things consist, Col. 1: 16, 17. It is by my power that the tempest rages, it is by my power that the waves roll. "Be of good cheer it is I." I have the power to calm the tempest, "be not afraid."

How often we forget the declaration of Jesus that all power in both heaven and earth was given to him. If we would keep this fact well fixed in our minds the difficulties that beset us would all vanish. Paul had this thought well fixed in his mind; when he was stoned and dragged outside of the city as one dead he simply picked himself up and went on preaching the same as before. Paton on the New Hebrides believed those words of Jesus; when the savages raised their javelins or spears to take his life he trusted God and was delivered possibly fifty times.

With the thought that Jesus is the "*I am*" well fixed on the mind the wonder of the stilling of the tempest vanishes, the walking on the water is only natural, the resurrection of the dead is inevitable, the changing as in a moment of the living saints a necessity, the conquest of the world and the binding of satan unavoidable. "*It is I.*" "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." How can Jesus ever have that claim unless he brings everything into subjection to himself?

Oh! to hear the precious invitation that Peter heard that night: The "*come*" of the Almighty, was it any wonder he could walk on the water while he had his eyes fixed on the "*I am.*" It is the same invitation to *come unto me* that has enabled millions to go thru flood, and flame, and torture the most cruel; it is the same call that leads men to the dangers of fevers and savagery in heathen lands now. The *come* of the "*I am*" implies an inexhaustible resource of power which must end in inexpressible triumph and glory. Oh, that the *come* of Jesus the loving Savior, the *come* of Christ the divinely anointed Messiah, the *come* of the all-powerful *I am* would be heeded by sinful, satan-bound humanity. In response to that word *come* Peter could walk where there was nothing for a man to walk on, nothing to save him except Jesus; that is just exactly where Jesus wants all of us to get to, with a situation where there is nothing beneath us to stand on, nothing on either side of us to lean against, and nothing above us to take a hold of but Jesus. It is at such a time, in such a place we learn to know the real saving power of Christ.

To be continued.

A BAD FACT

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An astounding thing is the fact that some members of churches will allow themselves to become suddenly alienated from their pastor if he chance to disagree with them in relation to some temporal matter, whereas they will heartily support him if their personal relations be pleasant, even tho he be a morally bad man. One would scarcely think that such could be the case, but it certainly is, in far too many instances. I know people, members of churches, and reputed to be fairly good Christians, who will continue to morally and financially sustain a pastor who is decidedly corrupt, until he perpetrates some mean trick upon them, and then they will break away from him. I also know some Christians who took offense a year or two ago at their pastor because of a financial transaction between him and them, but which did not reflect on the pastor's character, and they soon quit his ministry and refused to longer support him in any manner.

One of these offended ones is a deacon of the church, and yet he and his wife have been attending a church continuously, whose doctrines are, in several respects, directly and vitally opposed to those of their own church. I do not know that this deacon and wife would sustain a pastor whom they knew to be a vile and untruthful man, but I do know Christian people who refuse to support a pastor that holds views which are at variance with some of the fundamental tenets of their own church, and yet they will sustain a bad minister who professes to stand loyally to every item of the church's faith. This is a bad fact. It is an amazing fact that there are most glaring inconsistencies in very many Christians. Not a few of them will much quicker take offense at a pastor